PART IV

PAGES 1-10

WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 8, 1914.

TELLS OBSERVER WHAT SHE KNOWS ABOUT YOUR TELEPHONE AFFAIRS

WAS READING

PLUTARCH'S

SHE WAS NOT -

LIVES AND



roperator. Nummer? - nummer?

"I want." said talk to you." Instantly

nan and indignant them." she replied, over the phone "Don't start that with me or I'll switch

you on to the manager." But I am in earnest," pleaded the "I want to talk to you in the

"Central" had evidently been reading "I know you." she snapped. "You're one of those fellows that have invitations for taxicab rides and theater parties.

Sone of them in mine." us talk sense," he pleaded. "T couldn't hire you a taxicab to take you from where you are sitting to the front door of the exchange. And as for theaters-why, I haven't been able to drag a

For the moment "Central" seemed con-

"Whaddye want?" she inquired "I have said three times," replied the

Observer, crossly, "that I want to talk to you. If you won't talk I'll have to hunt somebody else." The Observer was getting desperate. It is a good deal of a chance when you get

a strange girl over the phone to appease the whim of an editor. Suppose this girl should get somebody else to call a cop and I'd had to squelch him." and send him to the office of the Ob-"Talk for what?" demanded "Central."

"For a newspaper," responded the Ob-server, eagerly. "The people of Wash-ington want to know some of the things "Suppose you come to my exchange," said "Central," mollified. "I'll do what

Undoubtedly you're waiting for the ad-Undoubtedly you're waiting for the address of this exchange. Well, you don't get it. This particular "Central" runs a telephone exchange in an apartment hotel which is filled with everything from retired brewers who are trying to break into society to bored debutantes who are trying to break into society to bored debutantes who are trying to break into society to bored debutantes who are trying ing to break out. For spicy conversation, protest and pyrotechnics—you can't beat this apartment house.

"Come in around about 9," invited "Central."

When 9 o'clock arrived the Observer where in blazes did you pick up this Plato surface. "Studied," the telephone girl replied.

"Studied," the telephone girl replied.

In the front hall a fat and florid man, who evidently had been dining since about 5 o clock in the afternoon, was trying to tell the time by the circular register above the elevator shaft which was whirling dizzily as the elevator shot from floor "Blest if I know. A friend of hers. You ought to hear his voice."

The telephone exchange, a mysterious buttons and bronze-colored plungers, rest-ed flat against the wall, and before it sat a roticing the telephone girl, gave herself a sort of anaconda yank and a trim young woman with a receiver fast-ened to her ear. She was reading "Plu-dress around her. Then she lifted the

"I thought," said the Observer, "that all telephone girls chewed gum. They

"I thought," replied the telephone operator, "that all reporters carried pads and

pencils. They do on the stage." At this moment there was a violent commotion in a nearby booth—a great waving of arms and kicking of legs; and in a moment a red-faced, bald-headed man stuck his head out of the half-open

man stuck his head out of the half-open ed glass door and roared. It sounded like a prominent Turk asking his wife for dinner. One wouldn't suppose that any civilized human could develop a tone of such concentrated hatred on ten minutes notice.

"Why," demanded the bald man, "can't I get the right number here? Three times I have tried to get the pastor of my church and twice gotten the morgue. The third time I got an upholstery shop. What do I want with an upholstery shop! Are you people trying to be funny with me."

Are you people trying to be fulling with me."

The bald man glared ferociously through a pair of those tortoise-shelled spectacles which can make a rabbit look like a man-eating tiger. Then he disappeared into the booth like a jack-in-the-box and began frantically wagging the receiver hook up and down.

The Observer turned his face aside. Tragedy, to one who believed in the scale of ratios, seemed absolutely certain. If the telephone girl would give the Observer a grilling for trying to be pleasant, didn't it logically follow that she would go get an ax and have that fat man out of the booth and ready for burial?

She merely shifted her book languidly plugged in again and said softly to some other girl

"You gave this party the wrong num ber. He wants Columbia 47583."
"You bet I do," came in muffled tones from the booth, "and, what is more, want it quick."

The Observer was unable to restrain his

"Would you mind telling me," he asked.
"why you didn't go into that booth and
kill him?"
"Why should I kill him?" interrogated

"Why should I kill him?" interrogated the telephone girl, mildly.
"For that talk of his."
"Bless you," said the telephone girl, "I don't mind that a bit. You know, if you work in a boiler factory you can get used to it in a little while. And these men who roar are perfectly harmless. They're not the kind who sneak around to the manager and try to get you dismissed."

They're not the kind who sneak around to the manager and try to get you dismissed."

"But—but—"

"You see." continued the telephone girl. "every one gets a little bit crazy when he gets on the telephone. He seems to think that telephoning is his private institution. Why, I've seen a man—who would wait an hour for a botte dinner or two hours for a base ball ticket—moan like a wounded wildcat if he didn't get a number through in two minutes and a half. Ibsen says—"

"Let us keep off that Ibsen business," urged the Observer. "What makes them crazy, do you think?"

"Electricity, maybe. Pure cussedness, more likely. The telephone only serves half its purpose when it cuts the time of communication. The other half is its value as a safety valve. Why, a short-tempered man can get crossed on a line and in five minutes can get every particle of ill temper out of his system—Ill temper that has been seething there

for months. Of course, they have to take their chances with apoplexy. But then life is all a chance."

"You don't talk at all like the tele phone girls I've read about," said the "to Observer.

"Cen- I've read about," replied the telephone ral" left off being girl. "All reporters I have read of went "Central" and be-came a very hu- of having to get other people to tell

> By this time the bald-headed man had gotten his number, finished his conversa-tion and come forth to pay his little nickel. He was still a fine brick red, but you could see his temperature had gone down considerably

"Sorry I yelled at you, said he, gruffly.

The telephone girl smiled sweetly.
"Oh, that's all right," she replied. "We all get aggravated at times."
"Say," said the bald man, "you're there! I got a daughter as old as you, so you needn't mind me. But I'm going to slide you a box of candy."

The telephone girl thanked him, and the bald man, still fumbling for words, disappeared through the revolving doors. "I told you he was all right," said the telephone girl. "I can tell in a minute."
She had hardly finished talking when a flabby-Jowled, weak-chinned animal came walking in through the front door, started toward the elevator, hesitated, looked toward the, turried away again and seemed undecided what to do.

He was one of those fellows you may see any afternoon hanging over the engls.

see any afternoon hanging over the ends of bars with other animals of their type and discussing indecencies. His very ex-pression itself was an insult to self-re-

The calmness of the girl was remarkable; she looked at him coolly, appraisingly-as you would look at a prize guinea pig; looked at him and through him

animal flushed, and started toward the elevator.

"What would you have done?" asked "Hit him in the vanity," replied the

"Come in around about."

"Contral."

When 9 o'clock arrived the Observer wandered into the little cubbyhole to the right of the clevator, a place that nine people out office would never notice. In addition an orchestra was playing, and the sliding, scraping sound of myriad feet proclaimed a dance in progress. In the front hall a fat and florid man. In the front hall a fat and florid man, in the front hall a fat and florid man. In the front hall a fat and florid man, in the booth. "But ah you shuan you'd rawther go thah?"

"Heavens!" moaned the Observer, "let's get out of here."

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"Tourn, chum a-a-aw um-chum."

The Observer bowed his head in silent sorrow.

"You say," he said, "that he calls on heavily scented, rather pale and slen."

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chewing gum. This was the first dis- booth door open, mind you!

Over the Bounding Billows

"Sorry I yelled at you," said he, gruff

"If you hadn't been here," said the tele-phone tirl, "he'd probably have come over

telephone girl, succinctly. She resumed the thought. "If you get mad with a man he has always an advantage. He can laugh at

castic you are open to his retorts. But

tarch's Lives," and she was not-was not receiver and gave her number. And the

She finally got her number.

"Aw, deah," she began, and it sounded as though she were beefing about the telephone system.

"Now listen to Tootsie," urged the tel-



CALLS ME

MY DEAR

YARDS

AROUND

HER

DRESS

her?"

"He does," replied the telephone girl.
"And he always talks like that?"

"You ought to hear him trying to get a ride in the elevator when that Louisiana darky is on!"

"I'm cured," said the Observer.

The languid lady arose like a delicate cloud from her seat, produced a nickel and haughtily flipped it in the direction of the telephone girl. Then she wafted away to meet "Chaw-chaw,"

him can get a job as international in-terpreter at the State Department to-terpreter at the State Department to-

"If we telephone girls wanted to go out tomorrow and call bluffs, we could establish ourselves as the greatest little muckrakers since the days of the Magna Charta. As Macaulay says—"
"You leave Macaulay alone and—"

"Well." went on this remarkable girl.
"There is a young man in this apart-"The Observer bowed his head in silent borrow."
"You say," he said, "that he calls on looking morning coat and gray trousers you ever saw. Every night he puts on you ever saw. his evening clothes. He carries a cane— and, worst of all, he calls me 'my dear

"That is a case." said the telephone girl, "where eavesdropping didn't hurt a bit. Anybody who can understand him can get a job as international in-

young man, crossly.
"'I ain'd your good man nor anybody This brought the Observer to a point

-By Ripley

SEEMED

UNDECIDED

"There were tears in the young man's voice as he pleaded.

"Great Scott," he protested, "you can't do anything like that.

"Can't I?" responded the tailor. "Vell, you just vatch me!"

"But what'll I wear?"

"Vare your pajamas, for all I care, retorted the tailor, and hung up.

"Of course, the young man didn't know I had heard him. So he braced up and in a moment called me again.

"I want to talk to the manager," he said, pompously,

be had been reaching for.

"Do you eavesdrop much?" he asked.

The telephone girl looked at him with pained surprise.

"Of course we do," she replied.

Then a happy smile came over her face, the kind of a smile that goes with great knowledge.

"Great Scott," he protested, 'you can't do anything like that."

Else's good man,' snapped the heavy voice. 'I'm a honest tallor, dots vat I am. Unt you don't ged no pants until I ged my money.'

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retorted the tailor, and hung up.

"Of course, the young man didn't know I had heard him. So he braced up and in a moment called me again.
"I want to talk to the manager, he said, pompously,
"I gave him the manager.
"You ought to have heard him. He got money for those trousers and a request from the manager to call for more whenever he wanted it. And he sent the elevator boy out to get the garments."
The telephone converted the brace of the said of the said

sent the elevator boy out to get the garments."

The telephone operator paused a moment of suppose that something had gone wrong. I listened.

"Is this the Umpstitch tailor shop?" asked the young man, pompously.

"Diss iss." replied a heavy voice.

"Well," continued the young man, with magnificent imperiousness, 'i desire you!

"Well," replied the tailor, 'und I delsier to ged my money for dem pants and dem odder two suids before I send anything."

The telephone operator paused a moment. There came a buzzing sound and one of the little black covers dropped.

"It call and see," she said.

"Speaking of requests," she said, "I sometimes think that people have more confidence in telephone girl plugged in a party who was flashing madly. All telephonic movements, to her, appeared purely automovements, appeared purely automovements.

"The telephone of the little black covers and one of the little black covers around as dee, "Seaked to be ap The telephone girl plugged in a party who was flashing madly. All telephonic

offices should have more perfect clocks than drug stores, but people seem to think so.

"Then there is the stranger in Washington who calls up Central' and asks her the nearest way to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Chances are that Central' never saw the art gallery in her life. But that doesn't worry her. She knows how to get there. And she directs the weary pilgrim with the accuracy of a crossing policeman.

remember once when I was on a general exchange-that was before I got a private exchange in this apartment house-a woman called up one night. She cried once. Then I could hear the telephone fall on the floor. I tipped off ness." the police and they got there in time to prevent a woman from being badly phone girl.

"Another time a man called 'Central' in a wildly excited voice. Send the engines to 1117" he shouted

'What street?' I asked. "'Don't argue with me,' he shouted,

Send the engines right away!" "What street? I repeated.
"This house is on fire, he yelled.
"Why don't you hurry?"

"It was useless to argue with him. So I simply turned the alarm over to information, who located the street in a mo-

mation, who located the street in a moment. Then we sent the engines there. The fire consisted of some excelsior which was burning in the basement, I learned afterward."

A stiff-backed, military-looking man came over to the booth, bowed courteously, paid 5 cents and requested a telephone number. The operator got it for blim. Through the booth door you could hear

"People don't realize what we hear! The military man was developing most beautifully pathetic tone. But it flidn't seem to be helping him much. "All right, my dove," he continued, sadly. "I will come home, but I warn

"The old bluffer," whispered the tele

you this will interfere with my busi

The military man came out booth and walked sadly away. "I guess," said the Observer, "that he isn't the only bluffer who uses a tele-

"No." admitted the telephone girl; "I guess most people do all their bluffing on the telephone nowadays,"

BOBBIE HILL.

Act Ostracised Him.

From the Boston Transcript. "Who is this Dean Swift they are talk ing about?" a parvenu once said to Lady Bulwer: "I should like to invite him to

my receptions." "Alas, madam," replied Lady Bulwer

him talking.
"But, my love," he insisted. "I must at-THE THE PARTY OF T



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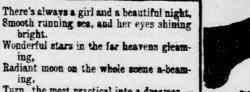


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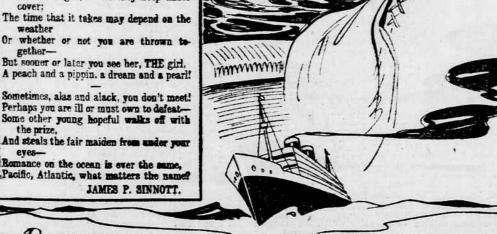


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